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Old State Capitol

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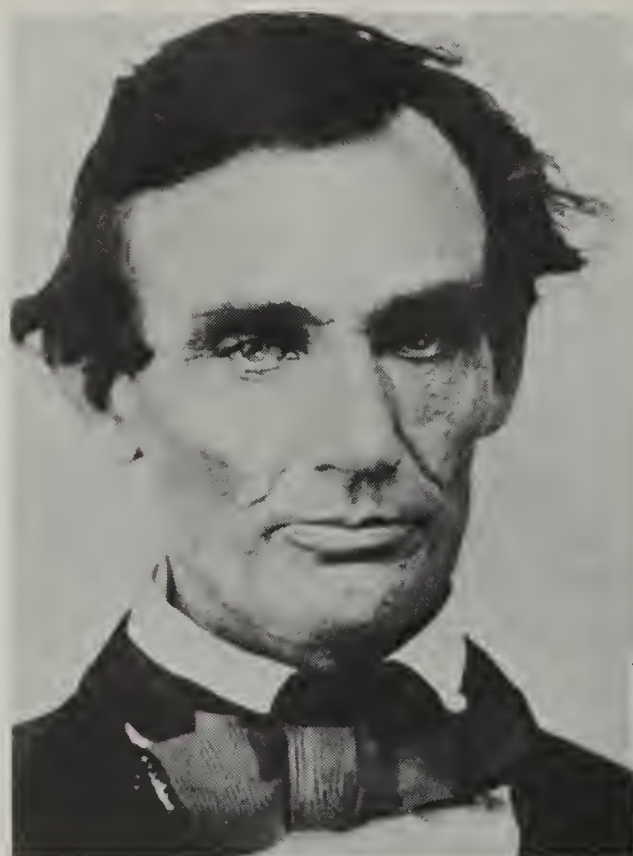


"'A house divided against itself cannot stand.' I believe this government cannot endure, permanently, half slave and half free . . . It will become all one thing or all the other."

—A. Lincoln, June 16, 1858

"I believe in my conscience that it is a duty we owe ourselves and our children, and our God, to protect this government and that flag from every assailant, be he who he may."

—S. A. Douglas, April 25, 1861



Abraham Lincoln, 1809-1865

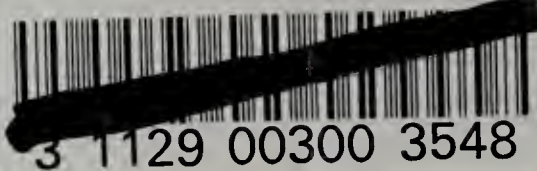
Postmaster, New Salem, 1833-1836

Deputy County Surveyor, 1834-1836

Representative in the General Assembly, 1834-1841

United States Representative, 1847-1849

President of the United States, 1861-1865



Stephen A. Douglas, 1813-1861

State's Attorney, First Judicial Circuit, 1835-1836

Representative in the General Assembly, 1836-1837

Illinois Secretary of State, 1840-1841

Judge of the Illinois Supreme Court, 1841-1843

United States Representative, 1843-1847

United States Senator, 1847-1861



The People ILLINOIS STATE LIBRARY

Among the historic sites in Illinois, none is more closely identified with **Abraham Lincoln's** rise from small-town lawyer to President-elect than the Old State Capitol in Springfield.

That the building exists at all is in large measure the result of Lincoln's efforts, for he

was the leader of a group of Sangamon County legislators who helped shape the legislative decision to change the state capital from Vandalia to Springfield.

The cornerstone of the Old State Capitol in Springfield was laid July 4, 1837, and from the

time the first rooms were opened for use in 1839 until Lincoln left Springfield to assume the Presidency, he was an almost daily visitor. During that period he had three law partners, but his various law offices were never farther than half a block from the statehouse square. Beginning December 7, 1840, Lincoln served his final months as a state representative in the Old State Capitol. He used the collections of the State Library, studied in the Law Library, and pleaded 243 cases before the Supreme Court.

The Old State Capitol soon became the center of political, social, and cultural life in Springfield. It was the scene of concerts, lectures, dances, levees, and civic and political meetings. At a number of those meetings Lincoln made speeches, the most famous being the "House Divided" speech of June 16, 1858, delivered after his endorsement for the U.S. Senate by the Republican State Convention.

That speech signaled the opening of the campaign and subsequent debates with Stephen A. Douglas, and brought Lincoln national attention. He was nominated for President on May 18, 1860, and soon thereafter began using the governor's office as headquarters at which he received friends, office-seekers, and politicians.

The Old State Capitol last saw Lincoln in death on the night of May 3, 1865: his body lay in state in the House chamber until the funeral at Oak Ridge Cemetery the next day.

The spirit of Abraham Lincoln dominates the Old State Capitol (and, indeed, accounts for the building's reconstruction), but the significance of the site both for Lincoln and for Americans today lies in its function as the Illinois Statehouse from 1839 to 1876. The building knew the footsteps and voices of many men deeply involved not only in local politics but in events that shaped American history.

Outstanding among these men was **Stephen A. Douglas**, who served in the Old State Capitol as secretary of state and as a judge of the Illinois Supreme Court before his election to the U.S. Senate by the Illinois General Assembly in 1847. As the leading Democrat of his day, Douglas addressed many civic and political meetings in the Old State Capitol. It was here he delivered his most famous speech before a joint session of the General Assembly in the House chamber April 25, 1861—six weeks before his death from typhoid fever. Defeated for President by Lincoln, Douglas nevertheless offered support to his former arch-rival and the April 25 speech was a dramatic plea for defense of the Constitution and the Union.

Ulysses S. Grant also came to Springfield that April. Although he sought a commission (based on his West Point training and eleven years of military experience), he was put to work as a military aide to the governor. Yet within weeks, Grant's abilities so impressed Governor Richard Yates that he commissioned Grant a colonel, assigned him to command a regiment, and thus started the Union's most famous soldier on the career that eventually would carry him to the White House.



Ulysses S. Grant, 1822-1885

West Point Cadet, 1839-1843
First Lieutenant and Brevet Captain, Mexican War, 1845-1848
Aide, Mustering Officer, Colonel of Volunteers,
Brigadier General of Volunteers, 1861
Major General of Volunteers, 1862
Major General, Regular Army, 1863
Lieutenant General, Regular Army, Commanding
the Armies of the United States, 1864
General, Regular Army, 1866
President of the United States, 1869-1877

A fellow state representative and friend of Lincoln's, U.S. Senator **Lyman Trumbull** served in the Old State Capitol—as did Douglas before him—as secretary of state and judge of the Supreme Court. As chairman of the powerful Judiciary Committee of the United States Senate, Trumbull was author or sponsor of many acts—including most of the Reconstruction legislation—passed by Congress from 1861 to 1871. Known as the Father of the Thirteenth Amendment (which abolished slavery), Trumbull also sponsored the Freedman's Bureau Act, the first national civil service reform law, and the first civil rights act adopted by Congress.

Another prominent Illinoisan, **David Davis**, served as Lincoln's presidential campaign man-

Lyman Trumbull, 1813-1896

Representative in the General Assembly, 1840-1841
Illinois Secretary of State, 1841-1842
Judge of the Illinois Supreme Court, 1848-1853
United States Senator, 1855-1873



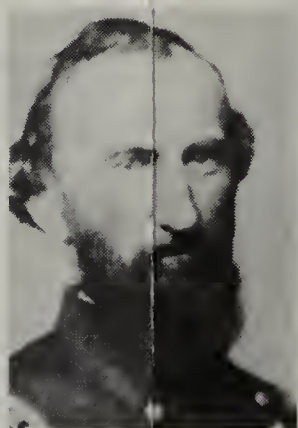
Perhaps most outstanding of the Illinois generals (after Grant), Logan had been a Democratic congressman from southern Illinois—an area well known for its secessionist sympathies. In the summer of 1861, however, Logan exhorted his constituents to side with the Union. Within months he became a Union officer (elected by his fellow southern Illinois volunteers) and rose to the rank of general. After the war he was again elected to Congress and served as one of the House "managers" in the impeachment proceedings against President Andrew Johnson. Logan was later elected U.S. senator and was nominated the Republican candidate for Vice-President under James G. Blaine. During the postwar years, Logan was also commander-in-



Palmer



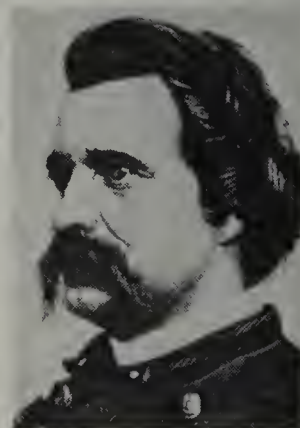
Oglesby



McClernand



Davis



Logan

ager in 1860. For his services he was rewarded by Lincoln with a seat on the United States Supreme Court. Davis later served a term as a U.S. senator from Illinois.

Davis had been a representative in the General Assembly and a delegate to the 1847 Illinois Constitutional Convention in the Old State Capitol. He could number among his fellow-delegates **Ninian Wirt Edwards**, Mary Todd Lincoln's brother-in-law; **Stephen T. Logan**, Lincoln's second law partner; and **John M. Palmer** who, after serving in this building as a state senator, would later become a major general in the Union Army, Illinois governor, U.S. senator from Illinois, and—finally—a third-party candidate for President in the election of 1896.

Palmer was one of many Union generals who served in the Old State Capitol's legislatures. The list includes Generals **John A. McClernand**, **John A. Logan**, and **Richard J. Oglesby**. Oglesby later became the only man to be three times elected governor of Illinois; he also served a term in the United States Senate.

chief of the Grand Army of the Republic (Union veterans of the Civil War); in that capacity he proclaimed the first nationally observed Memorial Day.

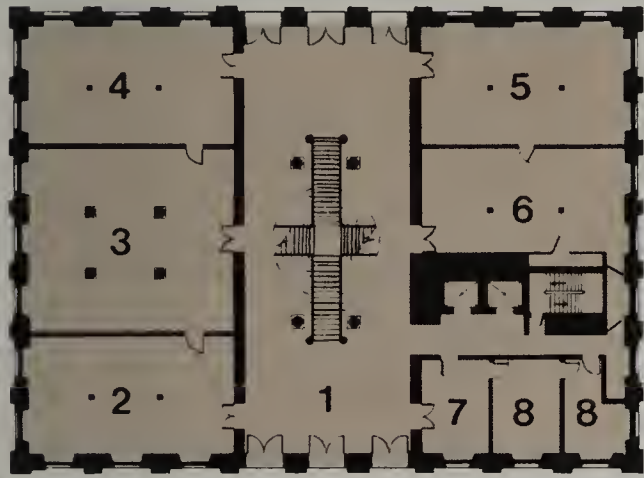
John A. McClernand served with Lincoln both in the Illinois General Assembly and in Congress, where, as a friend of Douglas's, he was active in support of the compromise measures of 1850. He rose to general in the Union Army but, after almost constant friction with Grant, resigned his commission before the war's end and worked as an enthusiastic supporter of Governor Yates in behalf of the Union cause.

When, in 1924, Springfield attorney Henry Converse called the Old State Capitol "the most historic building west of the Alleghenies and one of the most historic in the United States," he was not understating the matter. What Faneuil Hall in Boston and Independence Hall in Philadelphia were before the American Revolution, Springfield's Old State Capitol was before the Civil War: a meeting place for many of the future leaders of the Union cause.



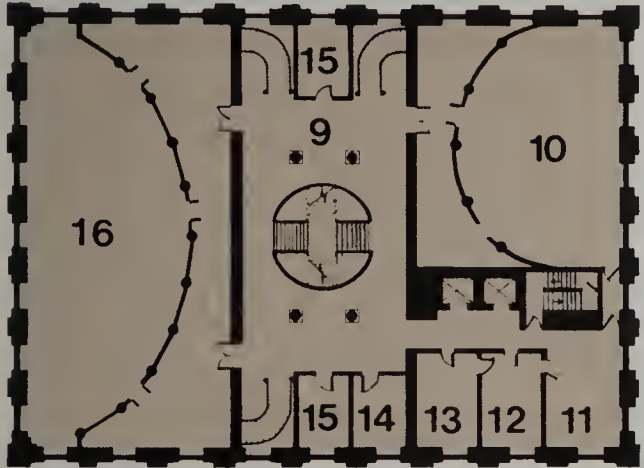
The Hall of Representatives, restored to appear as if legislators of Lincoln's day had momentarily left their work. This mood is captured throughout the reconstructed building. The painting of George Washington behind the dais is one of nine artifacts on display that are known to have been in the original building. The legislator's desks and chairs are replicas.

First Floor



- | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Lobby | 5. Supreme Court |
| 2. Auditor | 6. Law Library |
| 3. State Library | 7. Treasurer |
| 4. Secretary of State | 8. Curatorial Offices |

Second Floor



- | | |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| 9. Rotunda | 13. Superintendent of Public Instruction |
| 10. Senate | 14. Adjutant General |
| 11. Governor's Reception Room | 15. Committee Room |
| 12. Governor | 16. Hall of Representatives |

The Place

1837 February: The city of Springfield pledges \$50,000 towards construction of a new statehouse if the town becomes the new capital; on the 28th, the General Assembly selects Springfield over Vandalia—then the capital—after much urging by Abraham Lincoln and others.

The statehouse commissioners choose John F. Rague as architect of the new capitol. Contracts were let for quarrying, drayage, lumber, hard-



The Senate chamber, with its portrait of the Marquis de Lafayette. Both the Washington and the Lafayette paintings are the work of Illinois artist James W. Berry, commissioned in 1839 to copy them from two that still hang in the U.S. House of Representatives.

ware, blacksmithing, masonry, carpentry, plastering, glazing, painting, flagging, and teams and hands for moving dirt.

1837 June 22: Stonemason Jared Irwin notes, "I this day commenced laying the foundation of the State House @ \$2.50 per day."

July 4: "This afternoon we laid the 'Corner Stone' of the State House, after which an oration was delivered suitable to the occasion—the whole passed off with much eclat," Irwin's diary relates.

1838 March 22: With 100 other Springfieldians, Lincoln signs a personal note to the state bank for \$16,666.67—final payment on the amount pledged earlier by the city.

1840 December 7: The House of Representatives convenes in the new Capitol for the first time. Except for a week in January, 1841, when illness kept him from serving, Representative Lincoln attends most of the sessions, which continue until adjournment on March 1, 1841.

Despite many allegations about the costs, construction proceeds fairly smoothly and continues at a leisurely pace during the fifteen-year period from 1839 to 1854.

1843 March 1: Lincoln takes part in a Whig Party meeting in the Hall of Representatives; he serves on committees, writes resolutions, and makes one of the principal speeches.

March 20: Sangamon County Whigs meet in the statehouse to select a nominee for Congress. Lincoln is a candidate but steps aside in favor of his close friend, Edward D. Baker.



The earliest known photograph of the Old State Capitol, taken about 1858.

June 9-10: Lincoln writes resolutions adopted at a State Whig meeting in the Capitol; he also addresses the meeting.

December 11-12: Whigs hold their state convention in the statehouse and designate Lincoln one of nine presidential electors for Illinois. Lincoln speaks the second day.

1844 May 22: Lincoln addresses meeting in the statehouse of Sangamon County citizens

concerned with the annexation of Texas; he refers to President Tyler's plan for annexation as "inexpedient."

1850 June 4: The Illinois State Medical Society organizes in the State Library.

1851 August 9: New lightning rods are furnished and installed for \$136.66.

October: Trees are planted in the state-house yard.

1852 July 6: In the Hall of Representatives, Lincoln eulogizes Henry Clay—U.S. senator from Kentucky, national Whig leader, and framer of the Compromise of 1850.

1854 January: Among the many social and cultural events held in the Capitol over the years is a series of lectures by Ralph Waldo Emerson.

October 4: In the Hall of Representatives, Lincoln replies to a speech given by Stephen A. Douglas the previous day.

November 11: A flagstone walk dresses up the square, and by the end of the year the streets surrounding the statehouse are



The governor's reception room as it looked in 1860 to an artist from *Leslie's Illustrated Weekly*. Lincoln stands in the center receiving visitors.

almost free of mud, thanks to the city councilmen's decision to plank the streets.

1855 January: Illuminating gas is used to light the lamps in the gateposts of the fence around the Capitol. The General Assembly authorizes the governor and secretary of state "to contract for city water and for sewer connections . . . when available."

February 8: Lincoln is present when the General Assembly elects Lyman Trumbull a U.S. senator. A candidate himself, Lincoln earlier withdrew in favor of Trumbull.

1858 June 16: Lincoln is nominated for U.S. senator by the Republican State Convention meeting in the Hall of Representatives. His acceptance—now known as the "House Divided" speech—outlines the issues he later presses in the campaign and projects Lincoln onto the national political stage.

1860 May 18: The Republican National Convention in Chicago nominates Lincoln for President; soon Lincoln is using the governor's office and reception room as his headquar-

ters. He arrives by 8 a.m. almost every day until December 29, when he vacates the rooms to the incoming governor.

1861 January 9: President-elect Lincoln attends a joint session of the General Assembly in the Hall of Representatives at which Lyman Trumbull is reelected U.S. senator.



The governor's reception room as it looks today. The chain is a replica of an original carved by an invalid and presented to President-elect Lincoln; the links symbolize the 33 states and four territories in the Union.

February 11: The President-elect leaves for Washington. On the next day he will quietly observe his 52nd birthday.

April 25: At President Lincoln's request, Douglas tours the "Old Northwest" rallying support—especially among his fellow-Democrats—for the Union cause. He delivers his last—some say his greatest—major speech to a joint session of the General Assembly on this evening in the Hall of Representatives.

April 26: Ulysses S. Grant arrives in Springfield with a group of volunteers from Galena. Within a week he is appointed military aide to the governor and works in the statehouse; he is soon appointed a mustering officer.

June 18: Grant is commissioned a colonel of volunteers by Governor Richard Yates and assigned to command a regiment of particularly rowdy volunteers.

July 3: At the head of his regiment, the 21st Illinois Volunteer Infantry, Grant departs Springfield for Quincy; within three years he will be commander-in-chief of the Union Army.

1865 April 15: After four years of leading the nation through a bloody Civil War, President Lincoln dies at the hand of an assassin.

May 3: The President's body reaches Springfield at 9 p.m. and is placed on a bier in the Hall of Representatives. The body lies in state throughout the night until the funeral begins at 10 a.m. on May 4.

1869 October 23: The Capitol is sold to Sangamon County for use as a courthouse—sale price \$200,000.

1876 January: The state offices move to the newly constructed statehouse—the one still in use.

In 1898, a third story is added to the courthouse by gutting the interior, raising the entire building, and inserting a new first floor. The interior is rebuilt with a room arrangement differing from the original. Preservationists had succeeded in saving the exterior walls and porticos.

1962 June 26: After continued appeals by preservationists, the State of Illinois purchases the building back from Sangamon County for \$975,000.

1966 February 7: The building is dismantled stone by stone, with all the exterior stone and pillars removed, catalogued, and stored until they can be replaced in their original positions.

1966-1969: The Old State Capitol is reconstructed and refurbished to the period of 1840-1860; modern quarters for the Illinois State Historical Library and Society are provided on three floors beneath the building; and a two-level, 450-car-capacity parking garage is constructed beneath the surrounding square.

1969 November 15: The Old State Capitol is opened to the public as one of Illinois' most significant historic sites.

1970 March 20: The Sixth Illinois Constitutional Convention, having held plenary sessions in the present Capitol beginning December 8, 1969, reconvenes in the Old Capitol's Hall of Representatives. By the time it adjourns *sine die* on September 3, 1970, the convention will have drafted the state's present constitution—in the process renewing the tradition of historic events associated with the building.

The Old State Capitol has been called a perfect example of Greek Revival architecture. It measures 37.6 meters (123' 4") east to west and 27.1 meters (89' 1") north to south. It stands 18 meters (59') from ground level to roof peak, another 16.5 meters (54' 3") to the top of the cupola, and another 11 meters (36') to the top of the flag pole which flies a 3.7-meter (12') by 6.3-meter (20½') 33-star U.S. flag—the flag in use when Abraham Lincoln left Springfield for the last time.

The Hall of Representatives as it looked during a session of the Sixth Illinois Constitutional Convention in 1970. The 117 delegates created the first constitution to be ratified by Illinois voters in 100 years.



The Old State Capitol is open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. every day of the year except Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day. Group visits may be arranged by telephoning (217) 782-4836 or by writing the Tour Director, Old State Capitol, Springfield, IL 62706.

Visitors may hear brief accounts of the history associated with the building by using lightweight cordless earphones available free upon request.

Sound and Light at the Old State Capitol, an outdoor multi-media interpretive program re-creating the story of Abraham Lincoln's relationship with the Old State Capitol, is presented nightly at 9—weather permitting—from the Saturday before Memorial Day through the Saturday after Labor Day, beginning July 4, 1976.

There is no charge for admission to the Old State Capitol nor for viewing *Sound and Light at the Old State Capitol*.

The Old State Capitol is operated and maintained by the Illinois State Historical Library and Society. The Illinois State Historical Society—the only statewide organization devoted to the collection, preservation, and dissemination of Illinois history—invites you to participate in its activities and programs. For information write Membership Secretary, Illinois State Historical Society, Old State Capitol, Springfield, IL 62706.



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